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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5287
INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC
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RHHJJPI/PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1526
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4271
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3501
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0230
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1919
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5767
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2367
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9305
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3324
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA PRESIDENCY, PAKISTAN; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

OBAMA PRESIDENCY

1. "THE NON-BELIEVERS AND OBAMA" op-ed article by columnist Amarendra Nandu Dhaneshwar in the February 5, 2009, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily AAPLA MAHANAGAR. "In what can be termed a notably tolerant and broad based attitude to diverse beliefs and lifestyles, the U.S. President's inaugural speech took cognizance of non-believers in the United States. Just as Obama did not shy away from references to God in his invocation before the nation, he showed the political courage to endorse the existence of non-believers. No other U.S. President has referred to non-believers in the inaugural speech, which also proves that Obama's predecessors had not located the appropriate intersection point between faith and government in American society. Very few Indian leaders have found that golden mean in public life. Most of today's Indian leaders take great pride in divisive, inflammatory and rabid remarks against the agnostic and atheist sections of society, as though some tolerance towards these non-believers will rob them of their political goodwill..."

12. "PAKISTAN'S MENTORS," editorial in February 4 NAVBHARAT TIMES Hindi daily: "Japan may cut aid to India's metro rail, citing global recession, but it is going all out to help Pakistan. Japan is arranging to host an international ministerial-level donors' conference in late March to help Pakistan stabilize its economy. Japan would never take this kind of an unusual step, and it seems to be a part of the Obama administration's overall plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan. By doing this, it is quite evident that Japan wants to reinforce ties with the United States, because President Barack Obama has placed priority on stabilizing Pakistan and Afghanistan as part of efforts to fight terrorism. According to this plan, U.S. funds to Pakistan will increase proportionately with its troop presence in Afghanistan. Pumping in dollars will not help without addressing the root problem - that of Islamic terrorism, so ingrained in Pakistani society. "

13. "OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: PAKISTAN UNDER SEIGE, INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY," op-ed in February 4 RASHTRIYA SAHARA Hindi daily: "To start with, the founding fathers of Pakistan chose the path of danger and uncertainty. The results are there for everyone to see. Today, even the U.S. seems to be having a rethink on Pakistan. All through his campaign, Barack Obama said his administration would not hesitate to go into the

NEW DELHI 00000222 002 OF 002

territory of Pakistan to fight terrorism. He is still determined on his promise to check Pakistan. But more serious is the fact that Saudi Arabia, which used to aid Pakistan on the basis of Islamic brotherhood, is also pulling away and tightening its purse strings. Saudi Arabia is concerned about the Taliban and Al Qaida gaining strength in Pakistan. India must make sure that Pakistan does not disintegrate. As it is, we live in a dangerous neighborhood with China also so close."

MULFORD